

Stalk Nitrate Sampling

Stalk nitrate testing for corn is done late in the season to evaluate the efficiency of nitrogen management during the growing season. Corn stalks can be taken one (1) to three (3) weeks after black layer stage has formed in 80% of the kernels through post-harvest. If sampling after harvest, collect the samples as soon as possible as nitrates can leach from the stalks in the presence of water, such as rainfall.

Samples should be taken from representative stalks in the field. Avoid areas that have been damaged by insects or disease, barren or stalks that have fallen.

1. One (1) sample should contain ten (10) to fifteen (15) stalks to properly represent an area. Samples should be taken from areas of different management and soil types.
2. On a standing stalk, remove the stalk six (6) inches above the soil surface. Cut eight (8) inches above the cut and remove all leaves.
3. Bundle the stalks with duct tape.

Note: Do not use plastic bags to hold the sample. Mold will form and will cause improper results.

4. Label the duct tape with unique identifiers such as a location or number. These labels must match the label names used on the submittal form and must indicate the desired test in addition to necessary customer information (i.e. Name, Address, Email and Phone Number). This form is available on our website.
5. Samples should be delivered to the laboratory as soon as possible.

